

While the legitimate drama of the period was precluded from dealing directly with politics, there was in existence a popular form of drama which escaped, as a rule, from the restriction which limited the freedom of the superior form. The historians of literature think this kind of drama beneath them : to the political historian it is not without its value.

Macaulay quotes even farces, some of which were performed at Bartholomew Fair ; that is about equivalent to quoting the dramatic performances of the music halls of to-day. From one called *The Late Revolution* or *the Happy Change* he takes a description of the army of the Prince of Orange as it entered Exeter.<sup>1</sup> Another called *the Royal Voyage* he quotes three times.<sup>2</sup> ' This drama, which, I believe, was performed at Bartholomew Fair, is one of the most curious of a curious class of compositions, utterly destitute of literary merit, but valuable as showing what were then the most successful claptraps for an audience composed of the common people. " The end of this play/" says the author in his preface, " is chiefly to expose the perfidious, base, cowardly, and bloody nature of the Irish/"<sup>3</sup> There is a long series of such plays. ' The battle of the Boyne had scarcely been fought/ says Macaulay, \* when it was made the subject of a drama, the Royal

Flight, or the Conquest of Ireland, a Farce,  
1690.

Nothing  
more execrable was ever written, even for  
Bartholomew

Fair/ <sup>4</sup> But even in this mass of nonsense  
Macaulay

detects a fact of importance ; it is that while  
the Irish sol-  
diers generally were represented on the  
English stage as a  
mass of cowards, Sarsfield had a high  
reputation for

illl, 1138, n. (ix).

<sup>2</sup> III, 1455, n. 2; 1490, n. i (xii) ; 1694, n. (xiv).

<sup>3</sup> III, 1455, n. 2 (xii). « IV, 1884, n. 2 (xvi).